

To whom it may concern:

I will admit that I was against satellite radio when it first came out, but from the consumer's side of things. "Who'd ever pay for radio, which I can get for free?", I'd ask people who were promoting it. I drove a friend's car equipped with satellite radio for a weekend... that Monday I went to the nearest electronics store and bought an XM satellite radio receiver. That was two years ago. Since then, I've become quite a proponent of satellite radio. Sure, it's \$10 a month, but I get far more enjoyment from that than I do from \$65 of cable television, which leads me to the next point. Satellite radio is exactly like cable television. Sure, there are the "free" TV channels, which now average 20-22 minutes of commercials per hour. Terrestrial radio is slowly approaching those same limits. Not to mention that cable television offers a far wider variety of programs and content than any of the big 3 TV networks would ever air. When was the last time one of the big 3 networks aired a full-length opera? or a full-length polka concert? Which of the free TV networks airs programming from other countries? Which of the free TV stations airs local news, traffic, and weather 24 hours a day? None of them. However, I can find all of these on cable television, and XM satellite radio.

I have to admit that I used to work for a broadcast group which owned six radio stations in a radio market. I still have plenty of friends there and no harsh feelings towards the station, owners, management, staff, or otherwise. I simply persued a higher-paying career. I know how the business works, and yes, they do have reason to be scared. They are all using the same "formula" and are all trying to fight for the same listening audience and to please everyone. Anyone who's lived long enough has tried to please everyone at some point in their life and quickly realized it was a losing battle. The same goes for media. Rather than diversifying and building a loyal niche audience, most of the stations fall into about seven categories/formats. With XM, I have about 60 formats to choose from, and am more than willing to pay the fees to do so. No commercials, no useless babble by DJs, no DJs slaughtering pigs on-air, calling up foreign dignitaries and causing trouble, nor any DJs who base their entire show upon sex and sexual acts. Even if there were, I can call up XM and have those channels unavailable on my radio so that I, nor my children will not be able to listen to them on my radio. I'm aware that the free radio stations are worried about XM offering local traffic and weather 24/7. I hate to inform them, but the local stations in the Tampa market only broadcast weather reports in the morning, traffic is occasional at best and is usually only a 30 second report. On XM, I'm able to get the information I need, consistently, predictably, and in-depth. Cable TV offers The Weather Channel, but I don't see any local TV stations complaining about that. Our local cable company (Time Warner/Bright House) has a 24/7 local news station, yet I haven't heard of it being an unfair advantage to the local free TV stations.

Who owns the airwaves anyway? The people or the corporations? Let the consumers decide. As far as I'm concerned, the satellite radio companies have been more than responsible with their content, produce a quality product, and OFFER EVERYTHING THE LOCAL BROADCASTERS FAIL TO DELIVER. At one time, a pair of rabbit ears was the only way to watch 3 whole channels of television. Then came cable TV and variety and quality reigned, and the world rejoiced. At one time, AM and FM were the only way to received radio signals and you had a whopping seven formats to choose from. Now comes the satellite radio companies offering 100+ channels of quality news and entertainment.

I'd also like to add that if XM has no business offering "local" programming, then the terrestrial broadcasters have no business offering "national" programming either. The "local" ClearChannel stations in the Fort Myers metro area are all voice-tracked, with DJs who have never even been to the area and the music selection is determined by consultants in NY and California. Yeah, that's real "local" entertainment.

Sean McHale